



Department  
for Transport

## Consultation Document

# Community Rail Service Designation: TransWilts Line (Swindon to Westbury via Melksham)

- Swindon
- Chippenham
- Melksham
- Trowbridge
- Westbury

February 2016

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Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR  
Telephone 0300 330 3000  
Website [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)  
General email enquiries <https://www.dft.gov.uk/about/contact/form/>

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# Foreword

## **Designation of the TransWilts Line: your views**

Thank you for taking the time to download this consultation document on our proposal to designate the TransWilts Line (Swindon to Westbury) as a community railway.

We fully support community railways and want to see our local and rural rail lines thrive. We recognise that the local community are well placed to develop innovative schemes which encourage local people and visitors to use local lines.

Typically a community rail line will be supported by a local organisation such as a community rail partnership (CRP) or rail user group working with the rail industry and local people. The TransWilts Line is supported by the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership.

Designation of suitable lines and services as community railways provides more status to these partnerships and allows them access to grants which help improve their local rail services and stations.

Over the past 10 years we have designated 40 local rail routes as community railways. We welcome your thoughts on this latest proposal.

Regards

Simon Hankin  
Community Rail  
Passenger Services Excellence

# Executive summary

We propose to designate the Swindon to Westbury route, known as the TranWilts Line, as a community rail service.

Designation aims to improve the financial performance, value for money and social value of the railways to help make sure of their future. Separate designation gives us the freedom and flexibility to try a new approach to achieve these aims. It also provides access to further funding.

We include a route prospectus, outlining the scope for development, including locally agreed objectives. Designation will help make this possible and to build on the good work of the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership (CRP).

We would be pleased to get your views and comments on the proposed designation and all your responses will be considered before the final decision is made.

As the Community Rail Development Strategy was widely consulted on, this is a short consultation involving key local and rail industry stakeholders.

Further information can be viewed under [Community Rail](#) in the rail section of the [Department for Transport's website](#).

# How to respond

The consultation period began on Wednesday, 10 February 2016 and will run until Wednesday, 6 April 2016. Please make sure that your response reaches us before the closing date.

Please send consultation responses to:

[simon.hankin@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simon.hankin@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Simon Hankin  
Rail Group  
Passenger Services  
Department for Transport  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON SW1P 4DR  
Phone number: 020 7944 3280

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

A list of those consulted is attached at Annex A. If you have any suggestions of others who may wish to be involved in this process please contact us.

## Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

# The proposal

We propose to designate the Swindon to Westbury route, known as the TransWilts Line, as a community rail service. This proposal is in line with the Department's Community Rail Development Strategy.

Designating the route will allow the community to design rail services according to local needs. This will help to increase passenger numbers, improve connections to key destinations and ultimately boost the local economy.

Designation will allow the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership the opportunity to:

- Bid into the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF) for projects that support their objectives. This grant provides funds for small projects covering marketing campaigns, community engagement schemes, research projects and small station enhancements.
- Attend ACoRP conferences and training events. The Department support a bursary scheme which allows the Community Rail Partnership Officer (CRPO) to attend these conferences and training events free of charge.
- Attend the Department for Transport's annual Designated Lines Seminar. As a designated route the CRPO will be invited to the annual Designated Lines Seminar which is used to update CRPs on wider rail developments; to share best practice and to network.
- Benefit from a more 'formal' status similar to a local authority. With designation there is often a strong psychological advantage with a feeling of recognition' and 'belonging' which cuts across the partnership.

# The TransWilts Line Route Prospectus

A detailed route prospectus for the TransWilts Line Route is provided as a separate document and we would ask that you refer to this before responding to the consultation.

The TransWilts service is located in Wiltshire County, linking the principle towns in the north and west of Wiltshire to Swindon. The TransWilts line runs from Swindon to Westbury including the three stations Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge.

The regional railway service provides access to services, links market towns to the national rail network, links to the coast, hospitals, shopping, business, commuting, and connects market towns and the principle towns.

TransWilts Community Rail Partnership covers the service between Swindon and Westbury with a special focus on the stations at Chippenham and Melksham.

# What will happen next

A summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing on 6 April 2016 Paper copies will be available on request.

# Question and answer brief

Below is a list of frequently asked questions about these proposals. If you still have questions after you have read this section please contact:

Simon Hankin  
Rail Group  
Passenger Services  
Department for Transport  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON SW1P 4DR  
Phone number: 020 7944 3280  
Email address: [simon.hankin@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simon.hankin@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Further background information can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-rail-lines>

Why are you holding the consultation at this stage?

The TransWilts Line Community Rail Partnership approached us with a view for a service designation of the route. We are satisfied that they are a robust partnership able to work well with local groups and key stakeholders to improve their services. We are also satisfied that the route is suitable for service designation.

Who is entitled to respond?

As the original strategy was widely consulted on, this is a short consultation involving key stakeholders and local groups. However, we have made this publically available and therefore welcome responses from any organisation or member of the public.

How do I respond? What issues do I need to cover and comment on?

Details on how to respond are provided in this pack. How much detail you provide and what issues you cover are entirely up to you. Responses can be as short or as long as you like.

The original Community Rail Development Strategy was published in 2005 and reviewed in 2007. Can you explain why you are still referring to a strategy which is over 10 years old?

The four values of the original strategy to increase revenue, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social & economic development still remain valid.

Will designation result in less subsidy from the Government for the upkeep of the line or development of services?

No. Subsidy and money available for local track maintenance and improvements will not be adversely affected by designation. Indeed designation will strengthen the CRPs bargaining power for grants and funds to improve local services.

Will designation in any way impact on freight or divisionary services?

This proposal is for service designation of the community rail line including several rail stations along the route. Service designation excludes the track and signalling and is used if there are other non-community services sharing the line. On this basis freight services will not be adversely affected by designation. More information on community rail and designation is provided with this consultation pack.

How will the local community benefit from designation?

Designation will strengthen the remit of the TransWilts Line CRP allowing them to work closely with local groups to improve their rail services and stations. This is outlined in more detail under the proposal.

Is designation a permanent arrangement?

Designation is intended to be a permanent arrangement, but it can be reviewed periodically to assess whether designation is still appropriate.

# Annex A List of those consulted

Great Western Railway  
South West Trains  
DB Schenker  
Direct Rail Services  
Freightliner Ltd  
GB Railfreight Ltd  
Network Rail  
Office of Rail Regulation  
Passenger Focus  
Rail Freight Group

Association of Community Rail Partnerships  
Campaign for Better Transport  
Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership  
Melksham Railway Development Group  
Rail Future  
Sevenside Community Rail Partnership cic  
Three Rivers Rail Partnership  
TransWilts Community Rail Partnership  
TravelWatch South West cic  
West of England Partnership  
West Wilts Rail Users Group  
Wiltshire Council

# Annex B Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available on the Better Regulation Executive website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/29 Great Minster House  
London SW1P 4DR  
Email [consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Please do not send consultation responses to this address.

# Annex C Background on Community Rail and designation

Community Railways are local railways, typically supported by a Community Rail Partnership working with the industry, local groups, communities and volunteers. In short these partnerships help bring together the railways and the local communities with the aim of increasing passenger numbers in a 'community focussed' way.

Their work includes marketing campaigns, promotions, railways walk booklets, line guides, station improvements, station gardens and safety programmes. They look for ways to make use of redundant stations with schemes such as independent cafes, community centres and book clubs.

To encourage children and young people to use the railway they are also involved with art and education projects and organising special events, such as music trains, Halloween Nights and Santa Specials. All these initiatives help to promote the railway and its relevance to the community. There are also schemes aimed to help disadvantaged, minority groups and senior citizens plus some larger infrastructure projects such as Eco-friendly stations.

Community rail lines and services are part of the commercial rail network accounting for around 40 million journeys per year. Train companies operate the services and Network Rail own and maintain the infrastructure, the track, signals and stations.

The Community Rail Development Strategy aims to increase revenue, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social & economic development.

Although many community rail routes are 'rural' a few, such as the Severn Beach Line in Bristol, operate in largely urban areas. There is a wide variation in the length of community rail routes and the number of stations they serve. The St Ives Bay Line in Cornwall is 4.25 miles long, whereas the Cumbrian Coast Line in the North West covers an 88 mile route.

Support is usually provided through a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) comprising the railway operator, local councils and other community organisations.

Community rail initiatives can help get better value for money from the rail network.

The **Association of Community Rail Partnerships** (ACoRP) is an umbrella organisation representing over 60 community rail partnerships and rail promotion groups. The Department provides core funding for the organisation.

ACoRP helps to identify innovative solutions for local railways and supports its members through disseminating examples of good practice; organising training sessions for its members and works with local stakeholders to develop new partnerships.

### **Community Rail Designation**

The Department has designated 40 routes as 'Community Railways'. These designated routes are intended to clarify the expectations and aspirations for the line and can be 'service' or 'line' designations.

The Community Rail Development Strategy aims to secure the long term viability of local railways and includes the formal designation of suitable local community rail lines and services.

Designation encourages good standards of practice and provides a more flexible approach in the way they are run. Designation reinforces the importance and status of the Community Rail Partnership for the line.

Designation can be either 'line' or 'service'. Line designation covers the track and signalling, service designation excludes the track and signalling and is used if there are other services such as freight sharing the line or if the line is part of a 'Trans European Network' (TEN) route. Many community rail routes are a combination of both 'line' and 'service'.

Designation follows a consultation process with local and rail industry stakeholders and endorsement by the National Community Rail Development Implementation Steering Group. This steering group is a partnership of central and local government, Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and ACoRP. It aims

to support community railways to secure their future and put them on a more sustainability footing.

### **The Route Prospectus**

The Route Prospectus is a short document which outlines the aspirations of the partnership for developing the line and services over a 5 to 10 year period and will be published on the Departments' website following designation.